

Fiscal Note

BILL # SB 1707

TITLE: ESAs; grant recipients; qualified students

SPONSOR: Boyer

STATUS: As Introduced

PREPARED BY: Patrick Moran

Description

The bill would expand eligibility for Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program to include participants in the Executive's educational recovery benefit program or the open for learning benefit recovery program.

Estimated Impact

We estimate the bill would result in annual General Fund costs of \$71,000 based on the current participation in these 2 programs.

Analysis

The Executives' Educational Recovery Benefit program provides \$7,000 per student for education expenses to families with children with incomes at or below 350% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who enrolled in a school that implemented a policy requiring the use of face masks on or after August 17, 2021. The Open for Learning Recovery program provides the same benefit to students enrolled in schools that closed in-person instruction on or after January 3, 2022. Participants may use the \$7,000 for tuition expenses, child care, before/after-school programs, school supplies, tutoring services, or school transportation services. The programs are being funded by federal COVID-19 relief monies.

The bill would allow participants in the programs to be eligible for the ESA program. The Executive reports that there are 134 students participating in the programs. We assume that all 134 current participants would enroll in the ESA program on an ongoing basis. We therefore assume that the bill would result in an increase in ESA program enrollment of 134 relative to current law and a corresponding decrease of (134) in public school enrollment.

On average, we estimate that an ESA award exceeds the cost of Basic State Aid for a public school student by \$529. As a result, an increase in ESA program enrollment of 134 would be associated with a net Basic State Aid cost increase of \$71,000.

Local Government Impact

None

2/16/22

